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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 001926

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SUBJECT: COUNCIL OF REPRESENTATIVES SET TO RECONVENE JUNE 8; SPLIT CONTINUES OVER SPEAKER'S POWERS

REF: A. BAGHDAD 1691
1B. BAGHDAD 1764

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR MARGARET SCOBAY, FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) In separate meetings June 7, Council of Representatives (CoR) Deputy Speakers Khalid Attiyah and Arif Taifour confirmed to PolOffs and PolFSN that they expected the CoR to reconvene June 8 to vote on the Ministers of Defense and Interior. Prior to the meeting, Taifour's staff confirmed that Kurdish Alliance CoR members have been ordered to attend the session. Taifour expressed uncertainty as to whether a vote on the Minister of State for National Security Affairs would occur and over who the leading candidate(s) are. Attiyah said he did not think SCIRI would boycott the session in the absence of an agreement within the Shia Coalition on MoI, but added that it might be possible.

¶2. (C) With both Deputy Speakers, Poloffs asked whether the Shia Coalition and the Kurdish Alliance would proceed with a CoR vote on the remaining articles of the bylaws (refs) * the majority of which deal with the allocation of authorities between the Speaker and the two Deputies) even if there is no agreement with Tawafuq. Both Taifour and Attiyah said their respective blocs would. (NOTE: The legislative agenda for the postponed June 4 session and the scheduled June 8 session includes a vote on the bylaws. END NOTE). Taifour characterized holding a vote on the bylaws as a matter of democracy. He added that he was not sure whether Tawafuq would walk out if this vote were held.

¶3. (C) Attiyah also said discussions have occurred regarding shortening the CoR vacation from two months (July 1 to August 31 as called for Article 22 (first) in the draft bylaws) to one month, utilizing the Speaker's authorities in Article 34 (fourth) to "extend legislative session by period not to exceed 30 days." As a result, the CoR might not convene during the month of August, but would stay in session during July.

¶4. (C) Comment: The Shia Coalition and the Kurdish Alliance seem intent on bringing closure to the issue of the Speaker's authorities through a CoR vote, rather than through negotiations. It is unclear how Tawafuq members will react.
End Comment.

KHALILZAD